



rivers&trails

National
Park
Service



rivers, trails, and conservation assistance program

EAST MOUNTAIN OPEN SPACE

Project Goal

The East Mountain Open Space project will create citizen stewards to help manage nine unique Open Space properties managed by both Bernalillo County, New Mexico and the City of Albuquerque. The project should increase the city's and county's capacity to plan and manage Open Space that leads towards better inter-agency coordination in providing for and managing outdoor recreation resources.

Background

The East Mountain Area encompasses 316 square miles in Eastern Bernalillo County, and has developed around three main mountain ranges: the Sandias, Manzanitas, and Manzanos, which are managed by the U.S. Forest Service. These mountains frame the area with diverse wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities and impressive beauty. Additionally much of the East Mountain Area was settled as the Carnuel Land Grant so there are close cultural ties to the land.

The East Mountain Area has experienced dramatic growth in the last thirty years with an increase in population by over 300% (from 4,055 people to 17,000 people). The projected growth rate is 11% per year with most of those people moving into large-lot, low-density, residential subdivisions.

It was Bernalillo County citizens who rallied for protection of open spaces on the east side of the Sandia Mountains. Under voter approved mil levy funds from 1998 and 2000, the County has purchased four properties totaling 922 acres in the East Mountain Area. The City of Albuquerque owns five Open Space properties totaling 3773 acres. Together, these Open Space properties protect viewsheds, springs and acequias, historic structures, archeological sites, wildlife habitat and cultural traditions.

The Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation Department requested assistance from the Rivers & Trails Program to support their efforts in involving the public in developing management plans for Open Space properties.

National Park Service Role

RTCA provides planning facilitation and technical support to the process, including community outreach support. RTCA will also provide information on technical and funding resources to support citizen based decisions on Open Space resource and visitor management. Specifically to date, RTCA has convened an East Mountain Open Space steering committee that represents neighbors, local organizations, land managers and recreation interests. RTCA will help coordinate Open Space planning and management between Bernalillo County, City of Albuquerque and the U.S. Forest Service so a seamless network of Open Space and National Forest is realized.



continued

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Project Results to Date

- Formation of East Mountain Open Space Steering Committee and establishment of organizational mission
- Creation of project brochure and feature articles in local newspaper
- Familiarization tours to nine properties for public and Steering Committee
- Acquired support of Subaru/International Mountain Bicycling Association Trail Care Crew for trails management
- Volunteer stewardship project including environmental clean-up, digital site mapping, fuel load reduction demonstration, bird inventories, and assessment of interpretive opportunities.

Project Partners

- Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation Department
- City of Albuquerque Open Space Division
- Sandia Ranger District, Cibola National Forest
- Trail Partners
- Carnuel Land Grant Association
- Talking Talons
- Acequia Madre de San Antonio Community Ditch Association
- East Mountain Historical Society
- Intermountain Conservation Trust

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